THE SEVENTH DAY.

22nd February 1915.

The Assembly met at 11 A. M. on the 22nd February 1915.

113. Certain defects in the Education Department.

Mr. M. K. Madhavan Pillai (Member, Karunagapalli taluk) made the following suggestions to remedy some of the existing defects in the Education Department :—

(1) The number of the inspecting staff was out of all proportion to the requirements of the department. The appointment of a Director of Public Instruction was made with a view to co-ordinate the department and to reduce the number of the Inspectorate. That number had exceeded at present the number which existed at the time of the appointment of a Director. The excess should be remedied by the appointment of one Inspector for all the Elementary Schools in the State in lieu of the existing Range Inspectors, each Assistant Inspector being put in charge of the Elementary Schools in his district.

(2) The new Higher Vernacular Examination was open only to the teachers of the department. It must be open to all, and History, Geography and other subjects should also be included in the curriculum as in the past.

(3) The teachers of Elementary Schools had to undergo training for two years. That was unnecessary and should be reduced to one year.

(4) In the Higher Grade Elementary Schools, there were at present no special teachers to teach English. A teacher on Rs. 20 should be appointed in each such school.

(5) The Government had resolved to appoint under-graduate teachers in all classes below the Third Form in supersession of their original decision to appoint only graduates in the Secondary Schools. That was a highly commendable change. He requested that the change should be introduced into the Model School also.

(6) Scholarships were awarded to students who secured the highest number of marks in particular subjects and not out of the total number of marks in all subjects. That should be modified and scholarships should be awarded to those students who obtained the highest number of marks out of the grand total.

(7) The Professors of the Arts College had not ample work. The matter should be investigated.

(8) The number of Professors in the College and of the Inspectorate, as also the scale of pay of the former, should be reduced and the savings should be utilised for starting a College in Central Travancore.

(9) The system of prescribing alternate text-books for the Elementary School classes was working great hardship to the pupils. That should be done away with and only one book should be prescribed.

(10) The managers and proprietors of Grant-in-aid Schools were not able to conduct the schools in accordance with the provisions of the Education Code, especially in so far as the buildings were concerned. The provisions of the Code relating to buildings, furniture etc., should be relaxed a little, at least for a few years, as regards the said schools.

(11) The want of a Malayalam Dictionary was a serious defect and the Government should take such steps as were necessary to remedy the same.

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(12) The vice of using tobacco and other intoxicants had become very prevalent amongst the student population and was assuming dangerous proportions. In Mysore and Baroda, the habit had been authoritatively prohibited. The Government should discourage and, if possible, eradicate the vice by introducing a penal provision either in the Education Code or in the Penal Code.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

114. Suggestion as to how the existing facilities can be increased and obstacles removed in regard to education.

Mr. K. C. Mamman Mappila (Member, Kottayam taluk) spoke at the outset about the difficulties confronting the Education Department at the present time and said that they were rather the ruinous legacy bestowed upon the Director of Public Instruction by his predecessor. The present difficulties of the department and the financial embarrassment of the Government so far as the Education Budget was concerned were the irresistible consequences of the policy inaugurated by Dr. Mitchell, who signally failed to understand the needs of the country and the aspirations of its people ; and the same policy was pursued and persisted in by the Government at the instance of the masterful personality of Dr. Mitchell but in defiance of the unanimous protest of the people. The protest first emanated from the proprietors and managers of Private Schools over whom the Education Code hung like the sword of Damocles threatening them with extinction. The Private Schools were the result of years of patient labour and enormous expenditure and the attempt of the Code and of its authors to accomplish the absolute effacement of such institutions from the State was an act of retrogression calculated to dry up the springs of indigenous activity and to obliterate a factor of no mean importance which more than supplemented the activities of the State for the educational regeneration and upliftment of the people. The problem of the present day, which was the inevitable consequence of the said Code and which stared the Government in the face, was how to curtail the growing expenditure on education—an expenditure which, in the long run, unless the present policy was modified, would permanently cripple the resources of the State. Yet the chief evils to combat which all the revolutionary changes and serious financial commitments were undertaken—the over-crowding in schools and the consequent deterioration in teaching and insufficient accommodation—were still more rampant at the present moment than at the time of the inception of the Code. The fundamental mistake committed by the authors of the Code was that they failed to perceive the important role which private enterprise played in the educational activity of the country. The result was that, in the enforcement of the provisions of the Code, private enterprise was practically throttled and all educational institutions became departmentalised. The tendency to departmentalise such institutions was perceptible even at the present day, as the old policy was still avowedly followed. The means whereby the institutions in question were sought to be departmentalised or extinguished were as follows :—

(1) Existing buildings and their equipments which were provided on the lines laid down by the department before the promulgation of the Code, were condemned wholesale. New models beyond the resources of most managers were laid down and scarcely any time was allowed to work up to them.

(2) Schools were also condemned and abolished on the ground of their proximity to burial grounds, although they were originally constructed with the permission of the department and although there was no evidence that such proximity had any deleterious effect on the health of the school-children.

The most unreasonable part of the transaction was that the above objection prevailed, irrespective of the real utility of the schools concerned.

(3) Impossible conditions were laid down as to the qualifications of teachers.

(4) The number of students to be admitted into each class was restricted and the rule was rigorously enforced.

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